(e) recommend revocation of licence for non-compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(f) ensure compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(g) protect the interest of customers of telecommunication services;

(h) settle disputes between service providers;

(i) fix rates for providing telecommunications within and out-side India; and

(j) monitor the quality of service and conduct periodical surveys of such service provided by service providers.

3. While the role and powers conferred on the TRAI envisage a substantial measure of autonomy to the Authority, the functions relating to grant/revocation of licences and fixing terms and conditions of licences still vest with the Central Government. As per Section 25(2) of the Telecom Regulatory of India Act, 1997, the TRAI shall, in exercise of its powers and performance of its functions, be bound by such directions on questions of policy as the Central Government may give in writing to it from time to time.

4. The TRAI has been set up mainly with a view to perform regulatory functions and, thereby, provide a level playing field in the Telecom Sector. As a service provider, the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) would come within the scope of TRAI's functions but its responsibilities, including in the field of policy, are not affected.

Post Offices in Rental Building

6348. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the post offices/sub post offices in Bihar are still housed in the rented accommodation in Bihar even after completion of buildings meant for post offices and sub post offices;

(b) if so, whether it is resulting in heavy revenue losses;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the Government propose of shift the post offices/sub post offices in the newly constructed buildings particularly about the completion of building for the sub post office of Simri Bakhtiyarpur?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No. All sub post offices are housed in departmental buildings where the construction work is completed and has been handed over to the department.

(b) No. Question does not arise.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) The on-going projects for construction of Post office buildings are likely to be completed in 1997-98 and in the case of Simri Bakhtiyarpur sub post office, the likely date of completion is 30.9.97.

More Money From Cellular Operators

6349. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to extract more money from companies operating cellular phones services in four metroes; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Tender for Trunk Automatic Exchange

6350. SHRI I.D. SWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after opening of a tender relating to trunk automatic exchange, the quotation was revised upward;

(b) if so, the full facts thereof alongwith the reasons for revising the quotation price after opening the tender;

(c) whether the Government propose to enquire into this matter and to took to guilty officials responsible for this serious fraud;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof;

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department agreed to enhance the price based on negotiations.

(b) An open tender no. 117-10/94-MMD for procurement of 2.77 lakh lines of digital TAX equipment was opened on 26.4.94. After evaluation of the bids and approval of the competent authority, Advance Purchase Orders were placed on 14.9.94. Since this equipment was being purchased for the first time, orders were to be placed only after the successful validation of the equipment in the DOT's network. The reasons for revising the quoted price after opening the tender are indicated below:-

(i) Site specifications different from the model specifications given in the tender.

(ii) Wide variation in foreign exchange during the period.

(iii) Increase in inflation, etc.

Since the TAX equipment was required urgently the Department set up an empowered Committee to sort out all the issues. After detailed discussions with the suppliers on technical and commercial issues, the Committee recommended per circuit cost of Rs. 4266/- instead of